IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made.

1.   (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

providing a set of predetermined function ~~definitions which are different; and~~ definitions, at least one of said predetermined function definitions defining a function for manipulating image data; and

preparing a project definition, said project definition including:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which said image data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which said image data can be supplied to the data destination, said image data from said data source being transferred to said source portion through a network; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ~~ports.~~ ports;

wherein preparing said project definition comprises:

displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and

allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool; and

wherein execution of said project definition operates at least in part to manipulate said image data according to said one predetermined function definition.

2.   (Original) A method according to Claim 1, including the step of configuring said network to include a portion of the Internet.

3.   (Original) A method according to Claim 1, including the step of selecting locations for said data source and said source portion to be physically remote.

4.   (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said data from said data source is in a compressed format; and including the step of causing said source portion to uncompress said data before outputting said data through said output port of said source portion.

5.   (Original) A method according to Claim 1, including the step of effecting said transfer of said data through said network in a manner conforming to a public communication protocol.

6.   (Original) A method according to Claim 5, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

7.   (Original) A method according to Claim 5, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

8.   (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function ~~definitions that are different,~~ definitions, at least one of said predetermined function definitions defining a function for manipulating image data, said program being operable when executed to facilitate preparation of a project definition which includes:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which said image data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which said image data can be supplied to the data destination, said image data from said data source being transferred to said source portion through a network; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ~~ports.~~ ports;

wherein preparation of said project definition comprises:

displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and

allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool; and

wherein execution of said project definition operates at least in part to manipulate said image data according to said one predetermined function definition.

9.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said data from said data source is in a compressed format; and wherein said program is operable when executed to cause said source portion to uncompress said data before outputting said data through said output port of said source portion.

10.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said transfer of said data through said network in a manner conforming to a public communication protocol.

11.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 10, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said transfer of said data through said network in a manner conforming with the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

12.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 10, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said transfer of said data through said network in a manner conforming with the File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

13.   (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

providing a set of predetermined function ~~definitions which are different; and~~ definitions, at least one of said predetermined function definitions defining a function for manipulating image data; and

preparing a project definition, said project definition including:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which said image data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which said image data can be supplied to the data destination, said image data received through said input port of said destination portion being transferred from said destination portion to said data destination through a network; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ~~ports.~~ ports;

wherein preparing said project definition comprises:

displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and

allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool; and

wherein execution of said project definition operates at least in part to manipulate said image data according to said one predetermined function definition.

14.   (Original) A method according to Claim 13, including the step of configuring said network to include a portion of the Internet.

15.   (Original) A method according to Claim 13, including the step of selecting locations for said destination portion and said data destination which are physically remote.

16.   (Original) A method according to Claim 13, including the step of causing said destination portion to convert data received through said input port thereof to a compressed format prior to transfer of the data through said network to said data destination.

17.   (Original) A method according to Claim 13, including the step of causing said destination portion to effect said transfer of data through said network to said data destination in a manner conforming to a public communication protocol.

18.   (Original) A method according to Claim 17, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

19.   (Original) A method according to Claim 17, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

20. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function ~~definitions that are different,~~ definitions, at least one of said predetermined function definitions defining a function for manipulating image data, said program being operable when executed to facilitate preparation of a project definition which includes:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which said image data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which said image data can be supplied to the data destination, said image data received through said input port of said destination portion being transferred from said destination portion to said data destination through a network; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ~~ports.~~ ports;

wherein preparation of said project definition comprises:

displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and

allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool; and

wherein execution of said project definition operates at least in part to manipulate said image data according to said one predetermined function definition.

21. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 20, wherein said program is operable when executed to cause said destination portion to convert data received through said input port thereof to a compressed format prior to transfer of the data through said network to said data destination.

22.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 20, wherein said program is operable when executed to effect said transfer of data through said network to said data destination in a manner conforming to a public communication protocol.

23.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 22, wherein said program is operable when executed to use as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

24.   (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 22, wherein said program is operable when executed to use as said public communication protocol the File Transfer Protocol (FTP).